AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 24 with the following rewritten paragraph:

- - Reference is now made to Fig. 1, which is a conceptual illustration of an exemplary modem pool arrangement useful in understanding the present invention. A first modem pool, generally referenced 100, and comprising a plurality of individual modems is seen in communication with a second modem pool, generally referenced 102, via a plurality of connections 104 over a telephone network 106. Connections 104 are typically copper wire pairs arranged in one or more bundles 108. The modem pools preferably operate in a coordinated manner where a data stream is split up and transmitted via multiple modems in one of the modem pools to the other modem pool where the original data stream is reconstructed. One example of such a modem pool system is described in Applicant/assignee's U.S. Patent Application No. ~~09/150,550~~ 09/510,550 filed February 22, 2000, and entitled "High Speed Access System Over Copper Cable Plant," that claims priority from United States Provisional Application Serial No. 60/121,228, filed February 23, 1999, and entitled "Access Express-Very High Data Rate Communication Channels Over Copper," both hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.- -

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 21 with the following rewritten paragraph:

- - Although standard interleaving techniques may be used at this point to provide protection against such cross-modem error bursts, doing so is likely to come at the expense of losing protection against modem loss or malfunction. This may be understood with reference to Fig. 4A in which a matrix 400 is constructed having a number of rows corresponding to the assignment of multiple data frames to the modems in the modem pool during multiple time frames. In the example shown, matrix 400 is constructed from an arbitrary 20 data frames. In matrix 400 a unique index is assigned to distinguish between each code

word-frame-modem combination. Thus, code word A1 of frame 1 is assigned index 1, code word D5 of frame 1 is assigned index 20, code word A1 of frame 2 is assigned index 21, and so on until code word D5 of frame 20 is assigned index 400. Applying standard interleaving techniques, matrix 400 is read column-wise and rearranged row-wise as shown in Fig. 4B. It may be seen that Fig. 4B having a matrix 402 provides protection against error bursts, since, for example, index elements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Fig. 4B, corresponding to code word A1 of frame 1 of Fig. 4A, are transmitted over multiple time frames. However, by transmitting each row according to modem assignment vector 314 (Fig. 3E) in order to maintain protection against errors due to modem loss or malfunction, it may be seen that index elements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are all transmitted via modem 1. Thus, were modem 1 to fail, the entire code word A1 of frame 1 would be lost.- -